

Message Text

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USDEL NO. EIGHTEEN

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ACON/WCIWY/MX

SUBJ: WCIWY: U.S. STATEMENT TO COMMITTEE II

1. FOLLOWING IS FULL TEXT OF STATEMENT BY JEWEL LAFONTANT, REPRESENTATIVE ON THE USDEL TO COMMITTEE II OF THE WCIWY:
BEGIN QUOTE: MR. PRESIDENT, PLEASE PERMIT ME TO JOIN MY COLLEAGUES IN OFFERING WARMEST, SINCEREST CONGRATULATIONS TO YOU UPON YOUR ELECTION TO THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF PRESIDENCY OF THIS BODY AND TO SAY "THANK YOU" TO THE SECRETARIAT FOR THE EXCELLENT REPORT AND BACKGROUND PAPERS SUBMITTED.

2. IN DISCUSSING EQUAL RIGHTS, OPPORTUNITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR WOMEN, WE SHOULD LOOK FIRST TO OUR OWN PARENT BODY -- THE U.N. LET'S MAKE IT MORE FAIRLY REPRESENTATIVE BY SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASING THE NUMBER OF WOMEN ON THE VARIOUS GOVERNMENTAL DELEGATIONS.

3. FURTHER, LET US ALSO SEE TO IT THAT THE WOMEN DELEGATES ARE REPRESENTED IN ALL COMMITTEES OF THE U.N. -- NOT JUST
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ON COMMITTEE III -- THE SOCIAL AND HUMANITARIAN COMMITTEE.

4. THIS IS A FAULT ALL GOVERNMENTS SHARE -- WHEN AS A U.S. DELEGATE TO THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN 1972, I DISCOVERED THAT I AND AT LEAST 45 WOMEN DELEGATES WERE ALL ON COMMITTEE III -- WHILE EACH OF THE OTHER FIVE WORKING COMMITTEES, INCLUDING THE LEGAL COMMITTEE, HAD EITHER NO WOMEN OR AT MOST TWO TO THREE. THIS PROMPTED ME TO ASK COULD IT BE -- EVEN THIS AUGUST BODY -- IS BURDENED WITH THE MYTHS AND THE ATTENDANT STEREOTYPES THAT WOMEN ARE SWEET, LOVING, DOCILE, UNAGGRESSIVE, AND BEST ABLE TO DEAL WITH HUMANITARIAN ISSUES AND AREAS OF SOCIAL WELFARE?

5. THE STATUS OF WOMEN TOUCHES EACH OF US, REGARDLESS OF POSITION, REGARDLESS OF COLOR, REGARDLESS OF NATIONALITY.

6. WOMEN STILL HAVE, IN THE WORDS OF AN AMERICAN POET, "MILES TO GO BEFORE WE SLEEP." BUT THE FIRE THAT FEEDS OUR DESIRE FOR COMPLETE AND FULL EQUALITY HAS NEVER BURNED MORE INTENSELY. WE WOMEN AROUND THE WORLD, THOUGH WE MAY TAKE DIFFERENT PATHS TO ACHIEVE THE SAME ENDS, HAVE NOT LET SECOND-CLASS TREATMENT DEPRESS OUR SPIRITS.

7. TODAY, WE WOMEN ARE SENDING A CLEAR SIGNAL AROUND THE WORLD THAT WE WANT FREEDOM AND OPPORTUNITY.

8. WHAT CONCERNS WOMEN TODAY AND WHAT CONCERNS THE U.S. IS THAT WE MOVE BEYOND THE STAGE OF RESOLUTIONS AND RHETORIC -- AND DEVELOP AWAY TO FULFILL THE GOALS OF INTEGRATING WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT AND SET UP REVIEW AND APPRAISAL SYSTEMS TO MEASURE PROGRESS IN THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN. (WE IN THE U.S. HAVE DEVELOPED A MECHANISM IN OUR OWN BILATERAL ASSISTANCE EFFORTS TO ENSURE THAT OUR DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS HELP WOMEN, FOR WE HAVE LEARNED THAT THIS CANNOT BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED.)

9. IN THE U.S., WOMEN ACCOUNT FOR NEARLY 2/5'S OF ALL WORKERS. TODAY MORE THAN HALF OF ALL WOMEN IN THE U.S. BETWEEN 18 AND 64 YEARS OF AGE ARE IN THE LABOR FORCE.

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10. IN ALL FIELDS, WOMEN HAVE BEEN MAKING GAINS. IN THE PAST THREE YEARS, FOR EXAMPLE, THE ENROLLMENT OF WOMEN IN MEDICAL SCHOOLS HAVE DOUBLED FROM ABOUT 3900 (OR 9.6 PERCENT) TO 7900 (OR 15.4 PERCENT).

11. MORE WOMEN WERE ELECTED TO PUBLIC OFFICE IN 1974 THAN EVER BEFORE IN AMERICAN HISTORY. 18 WOMEN WERE ELECTED TO CONGRESS LAST NOVEMBER. THE NUMBER OF WOMEN IN STATE

LEGISLATURES INCREASED BY ALMOST 30 PERCENT -- FROM 465 TO 610.
8.17 PERCENT OF STATE LEGISLATURES ARE WOMEN.

12. IN ADDITION, WE NOW HAVE A WOMAN IN THE CABINET --
FOR THE SECOND TIME IN U.S. HISTORY.

13. DUE LARGELY TO THE STEADY PRESSURE OF GROUPS FOR
EQUAL RIGHTS AND EQUAL TREATMENT, WE HAVE IN THE U.S.
AN EQUAL PAY ACT. WE HAVE THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF
1964 WHICH HAS BEEN SO IMPORTANT TO BLACKS IN THE
SEARCH FOR EQUALITY. THAT ACT INCLUDES A TITLE WHICH
SPECIFICALLY PROHIBITS DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT
BECAUSE OF SEX, AS WELL AS RACE, COLOR, RELIGION, AND
NATIONAL ORIGIN.

14. FREE AND COMPULSORY EDUCATION HAS A LONG TRADITION
IN THE US., DATING BACK TO THE 17TH CENTURY.

15. THE MAJORITY OF STUDENTS (BOTH MALE AND FEMALE)
AGES 5-16 ATTEND FREE PUBLIC SCHOOLS. OPPORTUNITIES FOR
FREE OF INEXPENSIVE POST SECONDARY EDUCATION BEYOND
THE COMPULSORY AGE OF 16 ARE BROAD AND EQUAL FOR MEN AND
WOMEN.

16. DUE LARGELY TO THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT, WE HAVE A LAW
THAT PROHIBITS DISCRIMINATION BY SEX IN EDUCATIONAL
PROGRAMS THAT RECEIVE FEDERAL MONEY.

17. IT IS TRUE -- LAWS ALONE DO NOT CHANGE PEOPLES'S
HEARTS OR MINDS, BUT IS SUBMIT, WHEN ENFORCED, THEY DO
CHANGE BEHAVIOR.AND -- AFTER A TIME -- AS WE ALL KNOW,
BEHAVIOR WILL AFFECT OUR VIEWS AND OUR ATTITUDES.

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18. WHAT WE WANT, WHAT WE NEED, ALL OF US -- OF ALL
RACES-- MALE AND FEMALE -- OF ALL COUNTRIES -- IS THE
ASSURANCE, THE GUARANTEE THAT WE WILL BE TREATED AS
INDIVIDUAL HUMAN BEINGS, FREE TO MAKE CHOICES FREE TO
BE OURSELVES, FREE TO PURSUE OUR OWN ASPIRATIONS IN
OUR OWN WAY. THANK YOU DISTINGUISHED REPRESENTATIVES.
THANK YOU MR. PRESIDENT. END QUOTE.
JOVA

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